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Weekly News
P- Goldstein
Michael R

Advertising

SoHo News Aiming at The Voice

By PHILIP H. DOUGHERTY

There are some 40 to 45 weekly community newspapers in this city making their money from local advertisers who generally can't afford the rates of the big metropolitan dailies.

"And some of them are newspapers in name only," says Bernard Edelman who edits four of them—with a total circulation of some 30,000—in Brooklyn. His company is Courier Life Inc.

Most of the publishers of these weeklies are probably content with covering their own small communities and restricting their circulations those areas. Not so Michael R. Goldstein, the 37-year-old editor and publisher of The SoHo Weekly News. He is positioning his newspaper as a direct competitor of the successful Village Voice.

As a matter of fact, he calls The SoHo News the second-largest English-language weekly in the city—second only to The Voice. Although he has been asserting the paper has a circulation of 30,000 for about a year he concedes that it's really closer to 28,000—unaudited. He says that the paper is available on some 400 of the city's newsstands.

"We're a good medium to advertise in if you're looking for a certain kind of audience—the kind you would have gone to The Voice for two years ago," he said, once again tying in The SoHo News with No. 1.

He thinks that audience is basically the 22-to-35-year-old group, who grew up during the 60's going to rock concerts, but he doesn't really know because he hasn't done any reader research, with the exception of sometimes watching who's buying the tabloid at newsstands.

One ad agency that does business with him is Diener-Hauser-Greenthal, whose account list is heavy in movie companies.

Hank Weintraub, the agency's vice president-media, says that The SoHo News hasn't really proven its circulation or its effectiveness and that he generally places only small space ads at the requests of clients.

"It has not proven itself to be a viable medium or the challenge of The Voice," they say they are, Mr. Weintraub said.

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Michael R. Goldstein at office of The SoHo Weekly News

Mr. Goldstein is proud of the investigative stories turned out by his staff, about 80 percent of whom are freelance. He said he considered The SoHo News an art community newspaper.

"If you read this paper every week you're going to find out how to survive in this city and have fun doing it," he said. "Everything that's hot and happening will find us there first."

Yesterday morning, in the high-ceilinged old loft building at 117 Spring Street that is the newspaper's new home, Mr. Goldstein and Darrell Hentine, associate publisher and director of advertising, gave a progress report and some hopeful predictions.

The average weekly advertising revenues last year were \$4,314 compared with \$2,854 in 1974. They are the only two salesmen at the moment, but, according to Mr. Goldstein, they are looking for three more. He'd like to double advertising revenues this year and get the paper up to 72 pages an issue by September. He is also hoping to raise some money for promotion in hopes of doubling circulation, too.

Although he says now that anyone is foolish to start a publication without plenty of capital, Mr. Goldstein says that he started The SoHo News with his last \$800.

Mr. Goldstein was born in Cleveland, went to Boston University and spent considerable time as a press agent in the world of rock music and movies. He started the paper in October 1973 because it was something he wanted to do at the time and, by his own description, has been walking a tightrope since. But he seems to be having fun doing it, which, after all, is what counts.

Meanwhile at The Voice, which is up in circulation (151,500 last week, with 106,600 in the city itself) and

ad pages and is running an average 10 pages an issue, Stephen M. Blacker, associate publisher, when asked to comment on The SoHo News, said, "There is a need for more papers but I don't see them as real competition."